

## Topic: Congressional spending

## Cutting the pork not hard to do

Hardworking taxpayers expect government spending to be responsible and effective, and they expect us to be good stewards of their tax money. Recent figures show it is time that we commit to putting our nation's fiscal house back in order.

The Congressional Budget Office recently released the monthly budget review that showed the federal budget deficit was \$347 billion during the first eight months of fiscal year 2004. This was \$56 billion more than the same period last year.

During this time of great challenge for our nation, it is crucial that lawmakers in Congress do more than offer rhetorical promises of lower spending; it is time to take meaningful action.

Serving my first term in the U.S. Congress, I will continue to vote for measures that lower government spending, and it is important for *Coloradoan* editors and this paper's readers that I serve to learn more about these votes.

For instance, I voted against two



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Soapbox

more than \$820 billion. Among several of the unnecessary projects included in these two bills, were:

■ City of Salinas, Calif., for construction of a swimming pool: \$325,000

■ Town of Thomaston, Maine, for construction of sidewalk: \$210,000

■ Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia: \$720,000

■ Boat House Museum in St. Charles, Mo.: \$500,000

■ Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame: \$350,000

Consolidated Appropriations bills. Last year, I voted against the fiscal year 2003 bill that contained a record number of pork-barrel projects and cost \$397.4 billion. I also voted against the fiscal year 2004 bill that contained more than 10,000 pork projects and cost

Although these bills included some important provisions, when loaded up with pork-barrel projects, they lost my support and, I believe, the support of the American people.

Furthermore, when it came time to vote for a congressional salary increase, I voted "no" because I believe members of Congress should be more concerned with improving spending problems and creating jobs than filling their pockets. Among all the votes on Capitol Hill about methods to save taxpayers money, this is one of the easiest.

Although the sum of this excess may not completely cover the deficit, it is indicative of the attitude on spending in Washington. There is plenty of money available to fund the government's priorities and reduce the current deficit numbers. Congress just needs to stop spending it on unnecessary, self-serving programs.

Marilyn Musgrave is Colorado's 4th District congresswoman.